

PADP 7110 Research Methods in Public Administration

Professor L. Jason Anastasopoulos

Class: 3:35–6:35pm Monday
135 LeConte

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Office: Baldwin Hall 414

Office Hours: 5:15–6:15 Friday or by appointment

Course Overview and Objectives

This course introduces students of public administration and policy to applied social science research methodology and their underlying philosophical foundations. Topics that we will cover include causality, measurement, experiments, natural and quasi-experiments, survey design and research ethics.

The goals of this course include:

- Developing an understanding and appreciation for the importance of empirical research in public administration and policy.
- Identifying which research designs and data collection strategies are best suited to a research question of interest.
- Becoming a good judge of what constitutes good, bad and awful research.
- Gaining some basic experience with modern research software and data collections methods such as [R](#) and **Qualtrics**.

Required Texts

O’Sullivan, E., Rassel, G. R. and Berner, M. 2008. *Research methods for public administrators* (5th ed). New York: Longman Publishers. Referred to in the schedule as **ORB**

Morgan, S. and Winship, C. 2014. [Counterfactuals and Causal Inference: Methods and Principles for Social Research](#). Cambridge University Press. Referred to in the schedule as **MW**.

In addition to these books assigned readings will be available here: <http://scholar.harvard.edu/janastas/teaching> or as links in the course syllabus.

Attendance and Participation

The most important content from this class will come from the lectures and group assignments during lecture time. Because of this and the rather technical nature of this class, attendance and participation in class is extremely important. If you cannot attend a lecture you must present me with a valid excuse at least 24 hours prior to the start of class unless the situation you encountered was an emergency. Either way, absence requires explanation and documentation if you do not want points taken off of your final grade.

Computer, Tablet and Cell Phone Use Policy

Laptop computers and tablets may be used during class sessions for note taking ONLY. ANY instance of unapproved use of laptop computers or tablets in the classroom will result in your laptop/tablet privileges being revoked for the remainder of the semester. Cell phones and other electronic devices must remain off and stored out of sight at all times during class.

Academic Honesty and Integrity

As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the [University's academic honesty policy](#), "A Culture of Honesty," and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in "A Culture of Honesty" found at: www.uga.edu/honesty. Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

Special Accommodations

Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations in order to participate in course activities or meet course requirements should contact the instructor and work with the Disability Resource Center (<http://drc.uga.edu/students/register-for-services>) to develop an accommodation plan. The student is responsible for providing a copy of that plan to the instructor.

Make-up exams and Incomplete or “I” grades are permitted in only extremely rare circumstances. The instructor has the right to (1) require documentation and proof of the need for the make-up exam or “I” grade (2) require the completion of different versions of assignments missed and/or (3) impose a grade penalty for a missed exam or Incomplete grade in the course. Please let the instructor know as soon as you see a problem developing. Any students wishing to withdraw from the course must follow the University’s course withdrawal procedures.

Exams and Problem Sets

There will be one midterm examination and a total of five problem sets/homeworks during the semester covering materials discussed in lectures and in the readings.

Students who cannot be in class on the scheduled dates in which examination is to be completed must meet with the instructor prior to the date in question. Failure to do so will result in a failing grade for the exam.

The format of problem set assignments will vary and may involve light programming and software manipulation and basic logic. Unless specifically noted on the problem set, these are **individual** assignments so students will need to show independent work. More information about each assignment will be provided in class the week before it is due.

Experimental/Quasi-Experimental Design Assignment

Students (in groups of 2 or 3) will be asked to prepare a research design to answer a question posed to them. More information about each assignment will be provided in class the week before it is due.

Group Assignments

To supplement homework assignments and readings, students will participate in small group activities in and out of class. Instructions for the activities will be given during the class and group grades will be assigned based on group performance.

Research Proposal Assignment

Students (in groups of 2-4) will be asked to prepare a survey project that includes identifying a sampling frame and design, developing a survey questionnaire and cover letter. These surveys will be designed with internet administration in mind and students may end up collecting and analyzing survey data from the survey that they designed.

Grades

Attendance and participation	5%
Problem Sets/Homework	10%
In-class Group Activities	10%
Midterm	25%
Experimental Design and Analysis Assignments + Presentations (Group)	20%
Survey Design and Analysis Project + Presentations (Group)	30%

Schedule

Note: Before the first day of class, please download the latest version of the R statistical package for your operating system and register for a Qualtrics account.

08.15 Course Overview

08.22 Philosophical Foundations of Research Design and Introduction to Research Design

René Descartes. 1673. [Meditations on First Philosophy](#) (First and Second Meditation ONLY).

Freedman, D., 1989. [Statistical models and shoe leather](#). Mathematical Social Sciences, 18(2), pp.192-192.

Kuhn, T.S., 2012. [The structure of scientific revolutions](#). University of Chicago Press. (Chapter 12, pp 144-159 ONLY!)

ORB Chapter 1

08.29 Introduction to Observational Studies, Experiments and Causality (HW 1 Due)

MW Chapter 1; Chapter 2, Sections 2.1-2.4

09.05 Labor Day, No Class

09.12 Experiments (HW 2 Due)

ORB Chapter 3 pp 56-77

- *Field Experiments*

Gerber, A.S., Green, D.P. and Larimer, C.W., 2008. [Social pressure and voter turnout: Evidence from a large-scale field experiment](#). American Political Science Review, 102(01), pp.33-48.

- *Lab experiments*

Milgram, S., 1963. [Behavioral study of obedience](#). The Journal of abnormal and social psychology, 67(4), p.371.

- *Online experiments*

Anastasopoulos, L. 2016. [Geographic Context as a Treatment: An Experiment on the Policy Effects of Immigrant Skin Tone](#).

- **Software tutorial:** using Qualtrics to conduct experiments.

09.19 Natural and Quasi-Experiments

ORB Chapter 2, pp. 25-38

Bronars, S.G. and Grogger, J., 1994. [The economic consequences of unwed motherhood: Using twin births as a natural experiment](#). The American Economic Review, pp.1141-1156.

Levitt, S.D., 1995. [Using Electoral Cycles in Police Hiring to Estimate the Effect of Police on Crime \(No. w4991\)](#). National Bureau of Economic Research.

Lee, D.S., 2008. [Randomized experiments from non-random selection in US House elections](#). Journal of Econometrics, 142(2), pp.675-697.

09.26 Observational Studies (Experimental/Quasi-Experimental Design and Analysis Project Due)

ORB Chapter 2, pp. 25-38

Putnam, R.D., 2007. [E pluribus unum: Diversity and community in the twentyfirst century the 2006 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture](#). Scandinavian political studies, 30(2), pp.137-174.

Pape, R.A., 2003. [The strategic logic of suicide terrorism](#). American political science review, 97(03), pp.343-361.

Stack, S. and Gundlach, J., 1992. [The effect of country music on suicide](#). Social Forces, 71(1), pp.211-218.

10.03 Midterm Exam

10.10 Statistical Sampling and Survey Administration

ORB Chapters 5 and 6

Berinsky, A.J., Huber, G.A. and Lenz, G.S., 2012. [Evaluating online labor markets for experimental research: Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk](#). Political Analysis, 20(3), pp.351-368.

10.17 **Survey Design and Measurement** (HW 3 Due)

ORB Chapters 7 and 10.

Bertrand, M. and Mullainathan, S., 2001. [Do people mean what they say? Implications for subjective survey data.](#) The American Economic Review, 91(2), pp.67-72.

Rasinski, K.A., 1989. [The effect of question wording on public support for government spending.](#) Public Opinion Quarterly, 53(3), pp.388-394.

10.24 **Tutorial: Building an internet survey with Qualtrics.**

10.31 **Descriptive Statistics** (HW 4 Due)

ORB Chapter 11

Tutorial: Descriptive Statistics with R

11.07 **Hypothesis Testing** (HW 5 Due)

ORB Chapter 12

Tutorial: Hypothesis Testing with R

11.14 **Research Ethics**

ORB Chapter 8

11.21 **Thanksgiving Break**

11.28 **Research Proposals Due + Presentations**